SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

LANSING, MICHIGAN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE May 26, 2004

SENATORS BASHAM AND BRATER PRAISE EXPANSION

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LANSING – Sen. Liz Brater (D-Ann Arbor) and Sen. Ray Basham (D-Taylor) are lauding yesterday's unanimous approval by the Senate of the Pollution Prevention Loan Program expansion. The Pollution Prevention Loan Program provides low interest loans to small businesses for pollution prevention projects. The newly passed pair of bills expands both the number of small businesses eligible for the program as well as the maximum loan amounts available.

OF POLLUTION PREVENTION LOAN PROGRAM

"This legislation expands the opportunity for more businesses to participate in the program and provides more financial incentive to participate," Brater said. "In addition, it makes the program more consistent with the Retired Engineer Technical Assistance Program (RETAP), which is often marketed with the loan program and works with similar sized businesses."

Previously, the Pollution Prevention Loan Program was available to businesses of up to 100 employees and offered maximum loans of \$50,000. Today's passage opens the program to businesses of up to 500 employees and increases the maximum loan to \$150,000.

Typical programs funded by the Pollution Prevention Loan Program can include: equipment or technology modifications; process or procedure modifications; redesign of products and substitution of raw materials; improvement in housekeeping, maintenance, training or inventory control; and certain energy efficiency improvements.

"In addition to providing increased opportunities for Michigan's small business community, this legislation is an excellent example of business interests and pollution prevention efforts working together," Basham said. "And money for the program is provided by the Clean Michigan Initiative, so it is already funded."

To date, some 21 projects have been funded by \$600,000 in loans. Examples include: an upgrading of dry cleaning equipment that is expected to reduce hazardous cleaning solvent usage by 50 percent; a printing company's purchase of a computer-to-plate imaging system that eliminated use of 280 gallons of chemicals; and a radiator shop's purchase of a closed-loop water recycling system that reduced the amount of lead, zinc and silt-laden liquid waste by 480 gallons.

The legislation was introduced last September during Pollution Prevention Week. It now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.